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NOTES AND NEWS.

THE monsoon is coming up, though it has hardly yet touched the famine-stricken areas. The Viceroy's telegram this week (June 18) gives the number of people on relief at 5,920,000, which still shows an increase. Yesterday morning (June 21) came the following supplementary message from his Lordship:—

> Monsoon not yet reached to the north of Bombay, and still light. Cyclonic storm on Bengal coast (Chittagong to Balasore) has disappeared.

The Governor of Bombay sends the good news that the cholera is decreasing generally. Meantime the Mansion House Famine Fund has gone up to £295,000—an increase of about £15,000 on the previous week. One would hope that when the significance of Lord Curzon's appeal is at length realised, the Fund will mount up more briskly. In the list of the week an interesting item is the contribution of a second sum of £500 from Trinidad: the Legislature voted one £500, and the other £500 was "subscribed chiefly by the coolies on the sugar plantations."

Elsewhere we give a report of a meeting in the Canning Town Public Hall, which was addressed at some length by Sir William Wedderburn on various aspects of the famine. The resolutions, which were unanimously passed, expressed deep grief at the horrors of famine and pestilence, urged not only liberal private donations but also an Imperial grant to the Indian Famine Fund, and called upon the Government to institute a searching enquiry into the causes that render the Indian masses so destitute that they cannot tide over the failure of a single harvest. The meeting was specially interesting from the fact that it was spontaneously projected and organised by working men engaged at the Thames Iron Works. The contributions these men have already made in connexion with the South Africa War—in which several of their comrades have fallen—have not prevented them from recognising the needs of their fellow-subjects in India.

The honorary secretaries of the London Indian Society have addressed an earnest letter to Lord Salisbury (which we print elsewhere) in renewed advocacy of a substantial grant from the British Treasury in aid of the famine-stricken millions of their countrymen. Lord Salisbury made merely formal acknowledgement of their memorial of March 2; and now they "crave to be informed, at the earliest possible date, of the well-considered conclusions" of the Cabinet. They review the reports of the advancing ravages of the famine during the past three or four months, and direct attention to "several references to the unprecedented nature of the Imperial exigency that have been made from both sides of the House of Commons" since the date of the memorial. Reminding Lord Salisbury that "the means and financial resources of the Indian Government" are "entirely extracted from the labour and privations of the Indian people themselves," they regard Lord George Hamilton's suggestion of a loan as but a "temporary and superficial expedient." For

> to say nothing of the addition to permanent debt that such an expedient implies, the annual interest on such loan would only add to the one chief economic cause of that chronic poverty of the masses of the Indian people whose present deplorable condition explains the utter destitution in which each recurring drought finds them, thereby throwing them on the tender mercies of famine relief.

Having driven home this argument by reference to the figures of the appalling "drain," the Society urges the Government to adopt "the only effective way," and suggests "a sum of ten millions" by way of grant. The grounds are sufficiently cogent:—

> It is not only on grounds of humanity, which are as strong as can be, in view of the rapidly increasing suffering of our fellow-subjects; it is not only on the ground of political equity, which, when looked into, would prove to be irresistible; but, looking before and after, it is a question of the very salvation of India as a source of profit and power to this United Kingdom. On the other hand, never could the principle of Imperial obligation be more cogent on the part of a wealthy, all-powerful, dominant country to its famishing and impoverished dependency than it is in this present crisis.

In reply to Mr. William Redmond (June 15), Lord George Hamilton stated that he does not propose "at present" to advise the appointment of a Royal Commission "to enquire into the best and speediest method of dealing with the state of affairs now existing in her Majesty's Indian Empire" in consequence of famine and plague. "It may hereafter be advisable," he admitted, "when the present epidemics are over, to utilise the experience gained by making it the subject of further reports." One must suppose that he means Reports, not by the ordinary officials, but by Commissions more or less similar to those of 1878 and 1897-8. There can be no question that such Commissions ought to be appointed, and we should have imagined it would be the best plan to strike when the iron is hot, as Mr. Redmond indicated.

We confess we cannot follow the operations of Lord George Hamilton's mind on the subject of the statistics of the famine mortality. He told Mr. W. Redmond that "it is quite impossible, with only a limited number of officials at our disposal, to ask them to put on one side the more pressing work of ministering to the wants of the distressed in order to make enquiries and ascertain statistics." Presently he told Mr. James O'Connor, who had returned to the charge, that "necessarily a considerable time must elapse before anything like adequate statistics can be obtained," but he would "accelerate the collecting of statistics as far as he could, and would see that it was published as soon as possible." Nobody expects "anything like adequate statistics" at present—statistics to hold the Government to as arithmetically correct and final. What is wanted is that the Government should communicate to the people such provisional statistics as it has in its possession; for it cannot be supposed that the Government is absolutely uninformed on the subject. Of course, the officials are not to be hampered with the collection of statistics so as to thwart their beneficent work; but when they do send statistics to the Government, it is hard to see why the public should not be furnished with a copy. It would be a new idea of Government office work to imagine that such a simple expedient would strain the official energies.

We were led to understand that the Government of India was bent on a very liberal treatment of the cultivators on the advent of the monsoon. The Special Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, writing from Broach, in Gujerat, on May 26, says: "I wish I could see any trace of such a thing here." "Two incidents that have come under my notice," he remarks, "point quite the other way." The Commissioner, Mr. Lely, whose exertions he joins with the Hon. Mr. Gokuldas in praising, secured a grant from the Famine Fund "to keep the remnant of the plough cattle from death," and made arrangements for getting up large quantities of fodder from the Central Provinces, where, as we have seen, there has been plenty

and to spare. The people's gratitude "was touching to see." But

alas for the sequel! The railway companies, after the first few hundred tons were carried, turned their attention elsewhere. Remonstrances, petitions were in vain. The Government of India were appealed to, but they declared they could do nothing. The railway remained deaf and obdurate. And so it has come about that the last hope of saving the beasts has had to be abandoned. . . . . It seemed cold comfort to tell these men that England will help, when the help is not forthcoming at the needful moment; but it was the best that I could offer them.

The other incident is also a railway muddle. The Government had placed an order in Bhopal for numbers of bullocks for Broach, but the railway energy and organisation were not equal to the task of transport. Just as well, perhaps, seeing the fodder also was delayed.

The same correspondent confirms Mr. Gokuldas's view of the fatal effect of the reduced minimum on the Broach people. He says:—

Here in Broach, where for some weeks the harshest treatment that I have seen in India was meted out, the state of the people beggars description. The "deterrent" element on which the Bombay Government lay such stress has had full play with a vengeance. . . . . The net effect of it has been semi-starvation, sickness, and an appalling death-rate upon the works, and starvation on a wholesale scale amongst the villagers who were "deterred" by the harshness of the tests from going upon the works. . . . . It is too late to repair the damage, now that the test has shown the people to be really and truly famine-stricken and the buried hoards of grain and ornaments to be figments of the Secretariat's imagination. The rules have indeed been relaxed, but the people have lost confidence, and multitudes have been reduced to that awful state in which the body wastes and shrivels no matter how much food is put into the stomach. The finest wheat and champagne would be useless now.

One would imagine that a worthy British national contribution would have averted not a little of this lamentable and preventible misery.

Now, when the mischief has gone so far, "the Government are taking measures." Additional officers are being drawn from all parts of India, and Mr. Lely has got "something like a free hand." But all this comes very late in the day. Hear the *Manchester Guardian* correspondent:—

The people have died, and are still dying, like sheep, and a regiment of doctors and nurses would be too small to render much assistance. It is sickening and horrible to the last degree, but there is the fact. Our Indian fellow-subjects, including some of the grandest races in the world, are doomed to die as the beasts that perish, and the British Empire, with all its might and glory, is unequal to the task of sending them succour in their extremity. . . . . No effort or sacrifice should have been too great to give the people the necessary protection. . . . . The very worst that could happen has happened, and I cannot think that this ghastly chapter is one that the British people can look upon without misgivings mixed with their grief. They were told that the resources of India were equal to the strain, and they must know by now that this is not the case.

"A little more frankness, a little more forethought and contriving, a little more energy in preparing for the enemy, and the worst horrors of this frightful business might have been averted." We commend these reflections to the India Office—and to the British public.

Those who still believe that famine relief under Native rule can never be successful would do well to read the account of the efforts of the Jaipur State to cope with the distress. In promptness and completeness the work done in Jaipur may well compare with that in any part of British India—even as seen by the not too friendly eyes of the special correspondent of the *Times of India*. He found the poor-house "a model of its kind." Not only is the material equipment of the best, the buildings substantial and airy, the arrangements for clothing the naked ample, the hospital accommodation excellent and the sanitation sound—"all this is purchaseable for rupees, annas and pies;" but one of the most pleasing features is the discipline, the general morale, obtainable only by close and sympathetic supervision. "Perfect order, regularity, and quietness were everywhere apparent, without any signs of aggressive authority." At Jaipur, too, is to be seen "a unique relief work, which pays its expenses." The leakage from a great dam has hitherto been largely wasted. Now by the labour of the famine-stricken "a fetid swamp is being converted into a series of tranquil ponds; the barren bank into a beautiful garden." Nor is this camp less to be praised in other aspects. Of the people it is said:—

Yet though they come from long distances—some are from villages a hundred miles away—and certainly do a fair day's work every day, their physical condition is good, and I was told those who have been pulled down rapidly pick up under these conditions. . . . The discipline was admirable.

One aspect of Native rule is becoming more and more apparent—that elasticity which under the impulse of contact with British India enables it often to anticipate the work of British officials. The correspondent of the *Times of India* says:—

In British India one relief work is very much like another. A slight difference between the codes and the method of administration is the only distinction. But in Native States there is more freedom, more elasticity, and a much greater play for the human equation.

The effects of this greater freedom are seen in Jaipur. For instance, we find that heretical institution, the cheap grain shop, which, indeed, was not set up until negotiations with the bunniahs had failed, but which is undoubtedly enormously popular.

The reasons for this are pretty clear. It secures to everyone a certain quantity of food for a fixed price, and removes the dread of a bunniah ring forcing values up to an artificial level.

Nor have the efforts to bring relief to the poor of high caste been less successful.

We are glad to observe that the *Globe's* "Indian Stretcher-Bearers' Fund" has risen this week to £2,120. The Lord Mayor has generously shown his sympathy by a donation of £250 from the Mansion House War Fund (Lord Mayor's Discretionary Branch), and "trusts that the invaluable services of these humble and devoted men will be adequately recognised by the public through the (*Globe*) fund." The fund is being administered at Pietermaritzburg by a Committee of which Captain Leumann, I.M.S., is chairman, and under the direction of the Colonial Secretary of Natal. "There is no class of men," justly writes Colonel McRae, "more deserving of kindness than the dhoolie-bearers and bhistis that accompany a British army in the field, and, I may add, who suffer more, and endure their sufferings more patiently." Subscriptions should be sent to the office of the *Globe*, and cheques made payable to Indian Stretcher-Bearer's Fund, crossed Hoare's.

Nothing could show better how far we have travelled in our views on plague regulations than a remark of the *Pioneer* in an article on the Cawnpore riots:—

Sanitary considerations come into conflict with political considerations, and statesmanship is apparently unable to reconcile the two.

But in the early days of the plague, reconciliation was thought quite unnecessary. The teachings of medical experts were to be enforced, if necessary, at the point of the bayonet. Now we have the *Pioneer* talking of "the dangers which attend the pretensions of organised medical opinion in England." Nay, even English medical men in India "have allowed professional zeal to outrun discretion." Further, our Anglo-Indian contemporary thus sums up the situation: "Better have plague than a sullen and discontented population. . . . The time has passed when it is profitable to experiment upon and test the endurance of the people."

The Bombay Presidency Association have after long consideration formulated their objections to the Mofussil Municipalities Bill. They object to elections by sections of the people, as giving especial opportunities to those who seek to rule India by dividing the people. They see some dangers in the proposals for the removal of members guilty of misconduct or neglect of duty. They protest strongly against the composition of Managing Committees being under the control of the Government. They strongly oppose the power of adding to municipal taxation being given to the Government; and they think that, as lunatics and lepers can be provided for more easily by the Central authority, the Central authority should bear the expense. They are against the appointment of a Chief Executive Officer. And they point out that the Bill comes under the condemnation passed by Lord Ripon upon Sir James Fergusson's proposals to proceed more cautiously with the extension of local self-government than the Government of India had contemplated. On this the *Times of India* remarks:—

An appeal to the Resolution of Lord Ripon's Government may not in all cases carry much persuasion with it; but the work of 1882 stands, there is no retracing the step taken then, and any measure

not in harmony with it can be taken only after very plain proof of its necessity.

Those who are so fond of boasting that we have established the reign of law in India, may be proud also to think that there, too, flourishes that great institution of civilisation, "the law's delay." In Merwara, in Rajputana, the duration of cases in the Courts of the Subordinate Judges in the year 1898 averaged, according to the *Friend of India*, 287 days for contested, and 148 days for uncontested cases. The Administrative Report for Ajmere-Merwara adds the remark: "Unsatisfactory as the figures are, they show some improvement upon those of 1897."

But in Indian administration delays are not the peculiar property of the law. They flourish equally in the Political Department. Mr. Hawes, a pleader for many years in the Kathiawar Agency Courts, had his *sanad* withdrawn by Colonel Hunter, the Political Agent. Mr. Hawes appealed to the Bombay Government, and his petition remained for six months in the possession of the Political Officer, through whom it had to be forwarded. His appeal was delivered to the Political Agent on September 26, and according to the *Times of India* it only reached the Government on March 20. At the beginning of June it was still unanswered.

Sir Antony MacDonnell finds reason to complain of the delays of the postal authorities, which he looks upon as the cause of the decreased use of money orders in the payment of rent. He says:—

If it were possible to enforce on the officials at all subordinate offices a habit of promptitude and business-like procedure in their dealings with the public, the business of the administration would, in all departments, be facilitated.

He also impresses on revenue officers the advantage, while insisting on punctual payment, of making the means of payment as easy as possible. In this connexion, it may be remembered a landowner in another part of India was sold up because he had entrusted his land tax to the post office, and it failed to arrive in time; nor would the Courts give him any redress.

The divinity that hedges the European in India now hedges also his dog. An ill-mannered cur belonging to an Indian Deputy Magistrate, and demoralised no doubt by supporters of the Congress, bit the dog of an English lady. For this misconduct on the part of his dog, the Deputy Magistrate, according to the *Bengalee*, not only had to apologise to the lady, but incurred the dislike of almost the whole European community of Benares. Nay, the Commissioner of the Division wished to transfer him to another station, and in spite of the Lieutenant-Governor refusing his sanction, he is still said to be working for that end.

The case of the woman who killed her would-be ravisher at Jessore has excited immense interest in India, and the upholding of her acquittal on appeal by Justices Handley and Prinsep has been hailed with great satisfaction. Without going into the merits of the case, it appears from the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* that one part of her conduct is deserving of unstinted admiration. With every motive for concealment, she came forward to admit that she had struck the blow so as to save the innocent from suspicion and her fellow-villagers from the harassing accompaniments of a police investigation.

The *Hindu* hails with great satisfaction the conduct of the High Court at Allahabad in not merely confirming the guilt of five members of the Police Force, but in enhancing their sentences. Accused of wrongful confinement and torture for the purpose of extorting confessions, their case draws attention to a great scandal, which poisons the fount of justice in India. The sentence of three and a-half years rigorous imprisonment on the Inspector, of two years on each of the two sub-Inspectors, and of one year on their subordinates is not too heavy for the crime.

It is pleasant to find that any good thing can come out of a Conference, if not out of a Congress. The *Times of India* actually comments upon the Bombay Provincial Conference at Satara in these terms:—

There have been eight or ten of these Provincial Conferences in the Bombay Presidency; they have confined their attention mainly to subjects in which the people of the Presidency are interested, and their resolutions have had the advantage over many of the judgments of the Congress that they have dealt with matters falling within the direct knowledge of the men who passed them. We could wish that at a time like this the Bombay Government would find means of letting it be known that every reasoned and reasonable expression of opinion as to the effect of its measures will be welcomed. They probably have an answer to give to much of the complaint and criticism embodied in the Satara resolutions. But their measures must have attained a perfection seldom reached by the work of man if there is not something in the representations of the Conference which they may study with profit.

It is a striking thing that the attitude of the Government should be open to such a criticism; it is hardly less striking that, the attitude of the Government being what it is, such a criticism should emanate from such an unexpected quarter. We ignore the thrust at the Congress, and welcome heartily our contemporary's honourable comment on the local congresses called Conferences. And our Indian friends will not fail to note the inherent power of a careful statement of facts and a just argument based thereon.

Mr. Justice Ranade delivered a most suggestive and well-balance address to the Social Reform Conference at Satara. We place on record the following pregnant passage:—

Above all mere ordinances and institutes stands the law eternal of justice and equality, of pity and compassion, the suggestions of the conscience within and of nature without us. We can no more resist the stream of these influences, as working for righteousness, than we can roll back the tide. All real prudence would dictate that we should take full measure of these influences and decide how far we must accommodate ourselves to the inevitable. All classes of society, reformers and anti-reformers alike, unconsciously admit the force of these considerations. The only difference between the two consists in the fact that while the latter yield unconsciously and under pressure, the former seek to use conscious effort to accomplish the same purpose; and between the two, the victory must be for those who do not wish to drift, but wish to be guided by the admonitions of their inward monitor, and the lessons of past history. People will visit England, whether their elders like it or not. The education of women will similarly be encouraged as each year rolls past. The limits of age for marriage will be raised. Inter-marriage restrictions will be dissolved. Caste exclusiveness will relax, and greater freedom predominate in all transactions between man and man. As prudent men, the question for us will be: Shall we float with this current or resist it?

We regret to record the death of Mr. Taleyarkham, a solicitor of the High Court of Bombay, in an unfortunate railway accident last Saturday (June 16), at Slough station on the Great Western Railway. The papers mention his case as "a peculiarly sad one; his wife died just before his departure to London, and he leaves six children." Among the injured were two other Indian gentlemen—Mr. D. C. Darodowlla and Mr. Phiroze C. Sethna—who were cared for at the Windsor Hospital.

We learn that a number of young Indian medical men—Drs. Ranade, Jathar, Pardhi, Munge, and Desai—have gone out to South Africa to render assistance to the sick and wounded, and especially to their own countrymen. With the exception of Dr. Desai, they are all Dekkhani Brahmins; and Dr. Desai is a Gujerati, who, if we mistake not, was encouraged in his studies by the thoughtful Gaekwar of Baroda. Dr. N. G. Ranade, we believe, is a brother of the distinguished Mr. Justice Ranade of the Bombay High Court. "Anyway," writes a private correspondent, "we Marathas are showing that we are not yet a dead nation, but that the spark of our ancient heroism is still there." That is right. We are glad to see heroic energies running strong in channels of peace, usefulness, and humanity.

India has been drawn upon to supply troops for China. Orders have been issued for the mobilisation of the 1st Bengal Lancers, Lucknow; the 1st Madras Infantry (Pioneers), Bangalore; the 7th Bengal Infantry (Duke of Connaught's Own), Fort William; the 1st Sikhs, Kohat; the 24th Punjab Infantry, Mhow; one company of the Madras Sappers and Miners (Queen's Own), and one battery of Field Artillery. Two of the infantry regiments will supply the denuded garrison at Hong Kong; "the rest will be available as a field force." The cost, we observe, ordinary as well as extraordinary, will fall on the Imperial Exchequer—as, of course, it ought. There is no croaking—as yet—about the perils of sedition, and the weakening of the Indian garrison.

NO NATIONAL CONTRIBUTION?

THAT the present famine is the worst of which there is any certain record—that it is much worse than even the visitation of 1897, which was itself universally admitted to be the worst of the century—is allowed on all hands. The distress extends over one-quarter of the entire territory of India, and involves one-third of the entire population. Before such a calamity the very bravest may well give up heart and hope, and doubt whether all the resources of civilisation are sufficient to save the country from measureless disaster. Week by week the same sad tale has come to us of the cattle dying by thousands and so cheating the hopes of a brighter future, of water failing, of the cholera seizing its victims amid the crowds of starvelings on the relief works, till those who had fled from famine were driven back by a more terrible enemy. The Hon. Mr. Donald Smeaton, special Famine Commissioner, travelling to Western India through the Central Provinces, wrote:—

> The condition of the country is much worse than I had anticipated. The deepest tanks and reservoirs which have never before been known to run dry are now as dry as a rock. *The whole country is one vast bare, brown, lonely desert.*

Turning from the land to the people, take these phrases from the special correspondent of the *Times of India*, writing from Udaipur (May 12):—

> Famine is writ broad in the Motaj Khana, or poorhouse, where eleven hundred miserable wrecks are sheltered. What a tale is told here! Starvation, agony, misery, is stamped upon each emaciated figure.

Such scenes might be multiplied by the hundred and the thousand throughout the famine-stricken districts of India —worse in some places than in others, but everywhere terrible in the present and ominous for the future. Such is a pale adumbration of the frightful situation which the Indian Government has to face.

There have not been wanting efforts—notably, by Lord George Hamilton—to lay the blame of the difficulties of famine relief on the advent of the cholera. In answering a series of questions in the House of Commons recently (June 15), he insisted that it was only where small-pox and cholera had attacked the relief camps that the mortality was above the normal, or that the dead had been left unburied to be devoured by the vulture and the jackal. "It is not a question of money," said his Lordship. The people can only be fed in large aggregates, and for such it is difficult to find pure water and to avoid epidemics. Putting aside the question whether large relief camps are necessary—in the Central Provinces small relief camps of a few thousands have been preferred—there is abundant evidence that the question of money lies at the very root of the matter. The food exists; the means of carriage exist; and yet, though cholera had never been heard of, the lack of money threatens at every turn to paralyse relief and prevent rehabilitation.

So far is it from not being "a question of money" that early in the period of famine the Government of India found it necessary to interpose and insist that relief should be dispensed on a scale less liberal than even the modest provision of the famine code. It is true that this was introduced with some references to the necessity of checking the rush of the prosperous to the relief works and some pious reflections on the demoralisation and pauperisation of the Indian people. But the despairing tone in which the whole subject was treated, and the doubts expressed as to whether the whole resources at the disposal of the Government could cope with the demands of famine, showed only too clearly that the primary motive of this parsimony was the compulsion of a hard necessity—the haunting dread of depletion of the scanty Government treasury—not anxiety for the ancient virtue of the people. The question of money, then, has already arisen; and it is bound to press with still greater insistence when the impoverished rayats are thrown back on the land. Voluntary contributions are but too obviously insufficient. Even the third appeal, the appeal of the Viceroy himself, has not yet made itself very sensibly felt in raising the Famine Fund to figures at all adequate to the clamant needs of India. Nor yet can the funds of the Indian Government, after its long fight with actual starvation, place the peasantry in a condition once more to face the world. Rather are the authorities intent—in the Bombay Presidency at least—on wringing his regular land-tax from the unfortunate cultivator. As the Anglo-Indian organ, the *Times of India* (Overland Weekly, June 2), puts it:—

> The cultivators will endeavour to make a fresh start in life, all of them poor, broken in spirit, and the best of them almost helpless. Through whole districts not more than a fifth of the cattle that they possessed before the famine will be alive; the majority even of these will be emaciated and scarcely fit for work. The cultivators themselves will still be, as they are to-day, destitute, having sold all belonging to them that was saleable—ornaments, household utensils, and clothes. . . . But there is something more and something worse in the prospect of the coming agricultural year than we have here indicated. There stands out on the horizon the figure of the revenue officer, with his inexorable demand. . . . The task of discriminating between those who can pay and those who cannot must be beyond any government dependent upon such agencies, and, unless some broad and courageously liberating policy is resolved upon in the suffering districts, things will happen during the next revenue collecting season which will lie heavily upon our consciences.

So, too, the *Advocate of India* (May 30) insists that, after the famine is over, the Government must provide many of the rayats with seeds, ploughs, and oxen, and maintain them till the crops are grown. For

> To leave the indigent rayat in all his present miseries, with the shackles of indebtedness, without the slightest chance of repayment of past debts . . . would be the height of financial folly.

Thus money is wanted—money not only to feed the starving, but to save and replace the cattle, to repair the ravages of the drought, and to make prosperous agriculture possible once more.

Where is this money to be obtained? Not from the thin rills of private charity, now flowing mainly in other channels and to other destinations; not from the Indian treasury, doubtful whether it can even cope with the work of saving life. The more the needs of the people the greater are the demands on its purse and the less the ability of the taxpayers to pay their taxes—a dilemma from which there is no escape. Lord George Hamilton, indeed, in reply to Sir Henry Fowler on Tuesday night (June 19), stated that the Government of India "had in this country an untouched borrowing power of £9,000,000, a portion of which he proposed to utilise next month." This is a more explicit repetition of his reply to Mr. Maclean on May 3. Well might Sir Henry be stunned by his friend's statement, and incapacitated for a moment from enquiring whether "there would be any grant from the Imperial Government before the nine millions which represent the unexhausted borrowing powers of the Indian Government were expended." Lord George Hamilton stood up firmly for what he says is "only reasonable." He said:—

> I have over and over again informed the House—and the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in complete agreement with me—that if the Indian Government cannot raise the money necessary to keep the people from dying we will go to their assistance, but in the first instance India must try to utilise the unquestioned resources at her disposal.

The Secretary of State appears to be beyond argument. How can he lay the flattering unction to his soul that he is adequately saving the people from dying? And what of the tens of thousands that have not died, but have got the seeds of death implanted in them? And why will he not distinguish between a charitable national gift to the Indians and a largess to the Government of India? Perhaps, after all, the blame really lies with the Imperial authorities, though Lord George must stand in the pillory.

We decline to accept the refusal of a national grant. For there remains but this one and only source from which the money so urgently needed can be properly obtained. Last week (June 15), when Mr. James O'Connor asked whether the Government intended to vote a sum of money for the relief of the sufferers by the famine in India, Mr. Balfour replied that he did not think there was sufficient ground for initiating a great change of policy such as the question suggested. The sufficient ground surely is the misery of India, the urgent need of money to repair the devastations of famine, and the impossibility of further burdening the taxpayers of India. The *Times of India*, in the article from which we have already quoted, and almost every line of which is in substance an eloquent plea for the grant, puts it aside as an insufficient solution. Like Lord George Hamilton, it looks to a loan. The future must be mortgaged. But the matter presses, and there are reasons in plenty for an immediate grant. In the first place, liberality now is true economy. As we showed last week, preservation is easier than rehabilitation. It is better to save what still remains, than to wait till the utmost depth of destitution is reached. Already four-fifths of the cattle are gone and

will be difficult to replace even with a lavish expenditure. Let us make haste and save what remains. Already there is a fear that great tracts may go out of cultivation, unless we come to the assistance of the peasants. But if there is a danger of an India permanently impoverished, there is a danger of a permanent reduction in our Indian trade. India poverty-stricken cannot be so good a customer to us as India prosperous. If we can save the agriculture of the country from lasting injury, our trade will reap the advantage in days to come. Nor is it a light matter, or one that we can afford to put aside as of no moment, that such a national act of generosity, if it be such, would increase our popularity in India and our prestige abroad. The miseries, the increasing and ever-recurring miseries, of our Indian fellow-subjects are a foul blot on our Empire; even a suspicion of our indifference to these calamities would dishonour us for ever. Nor can it be otherwise than galling to our self-respect, that we as a nation should stand idly by, while these sufferings are endured by our fellow-subjects in the Empire of whose blessings we so proudly boast. Individuals, no doubt, have given liberally, but as a nation we have done nothing. And even after we have thus counted up the injuries to our pride and our honour, our purse and our prosperity, of an impoverished India, there still remain considerations of still deeper import—considerations of equity and humanity, which urge us to some great national act of succour. We have made ourselves responsible for the government of the people of India; and we must bear that responsibility, even though the misfortunes that have fallen on her were none of our seeking. We have drawn vast sums year by year from that country—one of the poorest in the world—sums for which there has been no economic return; and have thus directly contributed to that poverty which turns scarcity into famine, and makes the failure of one harvest plunge a whole people into dire distress. Even in this year of misery, it is estimated that £16,000,000 will be remitted to England—the drain on the life-blood of India which even famine, though it may decrease, cannot stay. Surely, equity demands that some part at least of this £16,000,000 should be returned to India in this time of her distress. And if the Indians fail to make good their appeal to us as our fellow-citizens or our tributaries, there is that in their sufferings which must appeal to us as their fellow-men. On the broad grounds of humanity their appeal is even yet surely irresistible.

ASSESSMENT AND FAMINE.

THE close connexion between severe assessment and famine cannot be said to require further proofs, yet there will be no harm in storing up the Presidential Address which the Hon. Mr. Gokuldas Parakh delivered to the Bombay Provincial Conference at Satara in the middle of last month along with the recent expositions of Mr. Romesh Dutt and others. Mr. Gokuldas is at home in Gujerat, which has suffered from the present famine at least as severely as any other department of the Bombay Presidency. A survey of the ravages of the famine naturally led Mr. Gokuldas to consider the condition of the cultivators, and to enquire into the causes of their lamentable distress; and he wisely drew his illustrations from the people with whom he is specially familiar. We have already noted with pleasure his appreciation of the work done by the famine officials. "The large sympathy, the considerable self-sacrifice, and the great industry, with which the Commissioner, the Hon. Mr. Lely, the different collectors and other officers of Government have been applying themselves to the saving of lives and relieving of distress of men and cattle," he says, "have evoked the greatest satisfaction throughout our part of the country." His severe remarks on the penal minimum wage may be passed over now with simple mention, the authorities having ordered its discontinuance under cover of a formal reply to the incisive criticisms of the special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*; but his allegation that the establishment of it in the city of Broach and the neighbouring districts was followed suddenly by a fourfold increase of the death-rate ought to form the subject of a strict enquiry. Meantime we are concerned with his treatment of the Government assessment. And that would be noteworthy if for no other reason than that even the leading Anglo-Indian journal admits that the solid argument of Mr. Gokuldas deserves the serious consideration of the Bombay Government.

The Government will probably enough take a lesson from the consequences of its most inadequate suspensions and remissions of land revenue in the areas swept by famine in 1897. Still its attempt to collect revenue in the midst of the present distress, however justifiable in strict theory, is bound to work out in cruel hardship. The officials are over-worked by the famine alone, apart from the cholera, smallpox, and other evils in its train; the applications must be numerous—practically universal; and it is incredible that the Government should depend, in a matter of such vital importance, upon the opinions of their village officers, and enforce such opinions with fines, distraints, and sale and forfeiture of properties. Much distress must also result from insistence on the distinction between agriculturist and non-agriculturist occupants of land. Mr. Gokuldas says:—

> No coercion for the recovery of revenue should be applied with reference to occupant landlords of any caste or occupation who are unable to recover rents from tenants, and who have no independent source of income unaffected by the famine. I think also that no distinction should be made between land which the occupant himself owns and land which has been mortgaged by him to others. If suspensions are not granted in respect of mortgaged lands because the mortgagors are non-agriculturists, the measures would ultimately act very oppressively on the mortgagor, and would in many cases result in losing his lands altogether.

Mr. Gokuldas also pleads earnestly for liberal remissions, especially in the Deccan and Gujerat, in order to let the cultivators raise their heads after the storm; and demands should be written off at once, and not hung over their heads for an indefinite period of depression. In such counsels the Government will find its ultimate advantage as well as the rayat, for are not the interests of both bound up inextricably together?

What are the causes of the distress? Not want of thrift on the part of the rayat—"he does not drink, he has very few vices, he has no luxuries, and lives with the greatest economy," and his ceremonial expenses at deaths and marriages have been much reduced in the past generation and are "not at all large." Not the greed of the money-lender—"the money-lender is not the cause, but the consequence, of his distress." Unfortunately, the agriculturists are largely in the hands of the money-lenders, who are indeed necessary evils, and ought to be replaced by agricultural banks; but even the money-lenders "are not thriving." Mr. Gokuldas holds that "the heavy incidence of the land revenue is the main cause of agricultural distress." He says:—

> The incidence of taxation per acre in rayatwari villages of Ahmedabad, Kaira, and Broach is Rs. 2 11 1, Rs. 5 0 7, and Rs. 5 1 6 respectively; and the incidence of taxation per head of population of the fully assessed area is Rs. 2 7 8, Rs. 3 12 6, and Rs. 8 1 2 respectively. This incidence is very heavy. The crop experiment reports also show that the incidence of taxation in these districts must be very heavy. In the Report for 1897-98 we notice that out of nine experiments made in the Kaira district one showed 72 per cent. and another nearly 67 per cent. as the incidence of assessment on the gross value of the produce. In Broach 31 experiments are reported in that year. One of these shows the incidence at 42 per cent., and in six it was over 30 per cent. In the Report of 1896-97 we find nine experiments. One of them gives the incidence at 96 per cent., one at 73 per cent., one at 63 per cent., and one at 50 per cent.

The like results are shown in the preceding three or four years. What, then, are the consequences?

The consequences are of the most serious import. The occupants have been "unable to meet even the Government demands without considerable difficulty." In one of the districts mentioned during the past five or six years "the amounts of the unrecovered balances of Government dues have been growing from year to year." Distraints and sales have increased ominously. In Ahmedabad, for example, the distraints rose from 25 in 1892-93 to 599 in 1898-99. Forfeiture in default of payment has also largely increased. In spite of the competition for land and the dense population, thousands of holdings have been relinquished altogether: in Ahmedabad, Kaira, and Broach, 25,678, 6,549, and 435 acres respectively in 1896-97; 10,099, 4,716, and 454 acres respectively in 1897-98; and 10,099, 4,597, and 974 acres respectively in 1898-99. These facts tell a tale of continuous oppression, and yet the authorities do not seem to have given ear to it.

The root of the mischief appears to lie in the inattention of the settlement officers to the inevitable fluctuation of conditions. "In the greater part of these districts," says Mr. Gokuldas, "the first settlement of assessment took

place when Gujerat was in an abnormal condition of prosperity in consequence of a long sequence of good harvests, the high prices of agricultural produce in consequence of the war in America, and the large demand of labour and the high wages by reason of the construction of the railway, and the high price of land." On an estimate of such conditions, the assessment was fixed, other essential conditions—such as the varying "skill, intelligence, and power of sustained work" of the different classes and castes of agriculturists—being ignored; and no provision was made for the turn of the exceptionally high tide. Indeed, on the contrary, "at each revision survey assessments were raised considerably." On what grounds? "On grounds," says Mr. Gokuldas, "which would have no bearing whatever on the question whether the rayat's powers of bearing the burden of taxation with ease had improved in the interval." Such grounds were "the increase of population, of tiled houses, carts and cattle, the passing of roads and railways, rise in the price of lands, sub-soil water, increase of exports, the position, class, advantages, etc." These points open out a large field of consideration. Mr. Gokuldas takes them up one by one, and shows how they form "deceptive tests." To a very sensible extent they are undoubtedly deceptive, and some of them are wholly inadmissible. They are not peculiar to Gujerat, however, but are found everywhere; for everywhere the Government wants grounds for imposing an increase of revenue. In any case, they furnish opportunities for grievous mistake, and consequently of injustice and hardship.

The remarks of Mr. Gokuldas on the taxation of tenants' improvements ought to evoke attention and sympathy in this country. He affirms that the spirit of the rules made for the protection of such improvements "is practically disregarded." He says:—

> The tenants are never asked whether they have made any improvements or not; they are never given any notice requiring them to give evidence in the matter; and evidence of expenditure in ordinary, which they are not likely to possess, is expected of them. Occupants are [?not] given benefit of improvements made at considerable cost of labour. The people of a village are informed only of the increase of assessment on the whole village; they are not informed of the increase or decrease of the amounts of assessments of individual fields. They are not informed of the grounds on which assessments are sought to be raised, and without being furnished with the necessary information they are called upon to state their objections within a certain time. And the sanctions of Government and the Secretary of State are obtained before the people know anything of the grounds of increase and have an opportunity to meet them.

There may be an official answer to all this, but on the face of it there is something radically wrong in the procedure.

The consequences of the high assessments Mr. Gokuldas sums up under three heads. They are:—

> (1.) That the agriculturist is obliged to borrow.
> (2.) That he is unable to manure the soil, or to manure it properly.
> (3.) He is prevented from keeping his lands fallow or having a proper rotation of crops; and he is obliged to utilise all his lands for the crop that pays him best, quite irrespectively of its effect in impoverishing the land. There is a general complaint that the productive power of the soil is far under what it was twenty or thirty years back.

Hence "the agriculturist gets more and more impoverished every year, and he has no reserve left him to fall back upon during years of difficulty." The whole history and argument supports the contentions we have steadily put forward. It may or may not be that the Bombay Government "have commenced to feel that certain portions of the Presidency have been over-assessed." They ought to have felt this long ago. At any rate we heartily agree with Mr. Gokuldas's conclusion that "it is most desirable that Government should appoint a commission of enquiry in connexion with the question of over-assessment for ascertaining the extent to which the different parts of the Presidency are over-assessed," and, what is more, that "this enquiry be undertaken as early as possible."

OUR LONDON LETTER.

WESTMINSTER, Thursday.

TOUCHED by the volcanic genius of Mr. William Redmond the subject of the Indian famine had almost caused an explosion in the House of Commons last Friday. Mr. Redmond sees everything through the medium of the South African war. When Parliament proposes to do honour to a religious festival, the member for Clare comments on the inconsistency of a Christianity which makes war on the devotees of its own tenets in the Transvaal. When Lord George Hamilton assures him, with somewhat peevish iteration, that the distress in India is not a question of money at all—that money has nothing to do with it—Mr. Redmond declares that we are allowing people to die in India in order that we may have millions of money to spend on war in South Africa. That was what happened at the end of last week. The official optimism of the Secretary for India stung the impetuous Irishman into revolt, and it was significant enough that his unbridled defiances appeared to be witnessed with a certain degree of sympathy by members on both sides. If Mr. Redmond had gone one step further he would probably have been suspended —a calamity which in this age of advertisement might not have been without its advantages to India.

Yet notwithstanding Lord George Hamilton's repeated assertions that "money has nothing to do with it," members are obdurate enough to go on recommending the application of hard cash as a kind of emergency poultice. Moreover, the Secretary of State, in his calmer moments, admits that the question of money has some little bearing on the problem. Replying on Tuesday to Sir William Wedderburn he enumerated the Native States to which advances of money had been made to help them in dealing with the famine, and mentioned the amount of the loan in each case, representing altogether a very considerable sum. On the same evening Sir Henry Fowler invited the noble lord to say whether having regard to the appeal made by the Viceroy to the Lord Mayor for charitable contributions on behalf of the sufferers by the famine he did not think the time had arrived for asking Parliament for a grant from Imperial funds. Lord George Hamilton indicated rather than stated that in his opinion the time for such an application had not yet arrived. The Indian Government, he blandly observed, had still to exhaust its borrowing powers. Sir Henry was so nonplussed by this unexpected rejoinder that he failed to follow it up with a demand for elucidation. Having pondered over the matter for a few minutes, he seized upon a subsequent question by Mr. Maclean as a pretext for reopening the subject, and in a tone of incredulity asked if he had rightly understood the Minister to say that there could be no grant from the Imperial to the Indian Exchequer until the Government of India had exhausted its borrowing powers. Lord George Hamilton urged that it was only reasonable that the Indian Government should be expected to utilise its existing resources before coming on the Imperial Exchequer for a grant. "Does the noble lord mean to say that the Viceroy refuses to utilise the resources at his disposal?" demanded Mr. Maclean. But the Indian Secretary would not admit that shrewd interpretation of his deliverance.

If the lion may not help the mouse without a breach of precedent, the mouse may still be expected to do the lion a good turn without standing too much on ceremony. Two courses are open to the British Government in dealing with the military necessities of the situation in China. Troops may be diverted from South Africa, or a further draft may be made upon the garrisons of India. The latter alternative has been adopted. In reply to a question by Mr. Yerburgh the other night, Mr. Balfour stated that the Government had decided to send reinforcements up to Taku from Hong Kong, and to supply the Hong Kong garrison with Native troops from India. He did not say, however, whether the cost of this movement would be borne by the Imperial Government. The point, however, was brought up by Mr. Buchanan on Tuesday, when Lord George Hamilton stated that all the expenses, ordinary and extraordinary, would be borne by the Imperial Exchequer.

After an absence, too long protracted, Sir William Harcourt has returned to his place in the House of Commons. His reappearance was immediately preceded by a remarkably positive report to the effect that he had decided not to seek re-election to the next Parliament. If the report was positive Sir William's denial of it was emphatic. He stigmatised the story as absolutely false, and in a letter to one of his constituents took occasion to say that this was not a time when one could think of retiring into private life. The report is believed to have originated in rumours of Sir William Harcourt's failing health. The right hon. gentleman's rubicund and cheerful aspect as he sat in his old seat on the front Opposition bench on Tuesday night was a sufficient refutation of those disquieting whispers. Even Mr. William Redmond would scarcely have ventured to invade the front bench, as he did last Friday, had the doughty ex-Chancellor been then in

the neighbourhood of the brass-bound box. Sir William Harcourt's reverence for the dignity of Parliament would have caused him to take a severe view of the Irishman's adventurousness. He is supposed to be of a less austere temperament than Mr. John Morley, yet the latter not only enjoyed Mr. Redmond's jest, but is credited with having laughingly invited him to take up his permanent Parliamentary abode among ex-Ministers.

Dissolution is still in the air, but it is likely to remain in that nebulous region for some time to come. An attempt was made by Mr. Pickersgill at the beginning of the week to draw Mr. Balfour on the subject. The Tory leader was wary. He declined to admit that he had any precise knowledge as to the date of the dissolution, and added that at whatever period of the year it might come the Government had no intention of hastening by legislative act the operation of the new register. Everyone knows, however, that Ministers are simply waiting on events. They are sacrificing legislation and shirking the usual work of the Session in order to be free to dissolve at a moment's notice. Mr. Chamberlain's extraordinary bungle of the Australian Commonwealth Bill may be traced to his feverish impatience to get that great scheme out of the way. His repeated attempts to remodel the Appeal clause have shown that haste is by no means synonymous with speed. Had the Colonial Secretary not been haunted by his hopes of an immediate Khaki election he would probably have gone about the business in a deliberate and businesslike way, and it would all have been settled weeks ago without fuss and without friction. It does not always pay to have an electioneering expert at the head of a department of the State.

Mrs. Gladstone's death had long been expected, but when it came the blow seemed to fall none the less severely. Men of the older generation felt that the last link with a great and illustrious past had been severed. While Mrs. Gladstone lived she figured in the popular imagination as the vigilant trustee of a noble tradition. Over her grave, as over that of her husband two years ago, people of diverse politics and creeds clasped hands in a union of reverent sympathy. The Queen was represented at the funeral in Westminster Abbey, while the humblest of her Majesty's subjects were gathered about the doors. All who witnessed or took part in the service were impressed by the feeling that it was simply an epilogue to the memorable ceremony of 1898. The obsequies of Mr. Gladstone were completed in those of his wife. "Their bodies rest in peace," to quote the vivid words of one of the anthems sung over the dual grave, "but their name liveth for ever."

NOTES FROM BOMBAY.

WAITING FOR THE MONSOON.

SHEARING THE SHEEP.

STATE HELP FOR THE RAYATS.

[FROM AN INDIAN CORRESPONDENT.]

BOMBAY, June 1.

We are now on the eve of having our periodical monsoon, though as yet it has not made its appearance at Colombo, where it is calculated to be due about May 25. But in any case, so long as we have an abundant fall about the time that the agriculturists most need it, there will be no cause for anxiety. Still until that event is assured, there will be considerable uneasiness. Meanwhile our leading publicists have been busily enquiring what measures the State contemplates taking when the rains are upon us and the people on famine relief works return to their fields. Both the *Times of India* and the *Advocate of India* have discoursed wisely on this all-absorbing topic, and it is to be hoped the attention of all Englishmen interested in the present dolorous condition of the impoverished peasantry of the country will be drawn to it. Two essential points have been discussed—first, as to the imperative expediency of making fair but unconditional gifts of seeds, agricultural implements, and oxen to the poorest rayats; second, as to the expediency of large remissions of revenue. With regard to the latter the strictures of both the journals on the present most illiberal (not to use a harder word) policy of the Bombay Government should be studied with care. Both vigorously echo the public voice in the matter. It is notorious that the poorest rayats, before they had emerged from the effects of the dire famine of 1896-97, were plunged by the provincial tax-gatherer in misery and indebtedness. But as if that was not enough, there came the calamitous visitation of the present year, which has hurled them into even a lower deep. And then came the provincial tax-gatherer, whose cruel exactions have shocked people. The representative of the *Manchester Guardian*, who came here with an open mind to see things for himself, has been obliged to say, in one of his latest letters, that this hard process is pursued even in the midst of famine relief measures! No doubt the Provincial Government when thus scandalised chafes under the popular criticism and attempts to defend itself. But we all know what value to attach to official contradictions. So far then, I think, our Bombay publicists have rendered a valuable public service by referring to this matter in terms that are not to be mistaken. It is to be hoped that their criticisms will have a wholesome influence on the provincial authorities. At any rate, with so sympathetic a ruler as Lord Northcote, we hope soon to see a healthy change in the present policy of collecting arrears of taxes. That the Bombay Government have widely departed from the cardinal and most salutary principles laid down by the Famine Commission of 1879-80 goes without saying. Their action is in miserable contrast with those principles as embodied in paragraph 169 of the Report of that body. And it was time that the searchlight of public criticism was turned into the secret chambers of the Bombay Revenue Secretariat.

As to helping the rayats and enabling them to stand on their legs, it is a matter of satisfaction to note that the personal experience of our late Governor has suggested in the House of Lords the desirability of free gifts of seeds, ploughs, and oxen. And though the answers of Lord Onslow and Lord George Hamilton are somewhat cryptic, it is to be hoped the Government of Lord Curzon, with whom the discretion of turning advances into free gifts has been left, will advise the authorities at Westminster that gift is the only and essential measure at the present moment. It will be yet four months before the rayat can hope to raise his crops. But meanwhile he must maintain himself. And how is he to do that when he returns to his field on the closing of the relief works? In the first place, he has lost strength. Eight months' privation is more than enough to enfeeble the most healthy and the able-bodied. Emaciated as the famine-stricken rayat is with that dole of a pound, or a pound and a fraction, of ration, is it possible for him to till his land with anything like the energy of his normal condition of health? He must have adequate nourishment in the first instance. Where is he to get it? Has he any money? No; not a pice to bless himself with. On the contrary, he is steeped in debt. Will the money-lender advance him either grain or money to buy the grain? Of course he will, but on ruinous conditions, be the advance in cash or in kind. Is it right that the State should allow him to incur further indebtedness? That is the serious question. What, then, should be the remedy? Why, this only. The State should provide him with adequate subsistence, the cost of which it may recoup when he is in a position to stand on his legs. How can he manage to live, to pay arrears of rent, and refund part of his debt when he has not even the wherewithal merely to subsist, while busy at his field-work? *Money* is the one question. And it is not only generous, but in the highest degree wise, for the Government to recognise freely this cardinal want of the rayat; for it is necessary not only that he should be supported, but also that the land revenue of the future should be regularly raised. The State should never forget that the rayat is the backbone of its finance, and that whatever efforts are now made to ameliorate his woeful condition will in the long run prove to its own advantage. The State, therefore, should not grudge whatever amount is required for the next four months to keep him alive. Surely if it can find money to any amount for warlike expeditions of no utility whatever, and if it can burden the taxpayer with loads of interest on unproductive railways which have cost crores and crores, and if it can afford to give cakes and ale to the Services by way of exchange compensation allowance, it is absurd to think it cannot find the two crores or so which may be necessary to rehabilitate the rayat. It therefore remains to be seen what the Government of India resolves to do in this direction within the next three or four weeks. It is to be fervently hoped that Lord Curzon will have enough courage and sympathy, and enough practical statesmanship, to follow enlightened public opinion in the matter and advance his reputation as a wise and farsighted administrator. It is occasions like the present which test the metal of the head of the State and stamp him as a true ruler of men or otherwise. Judging from what we have seen of Lord Curzon during the last eighteen months, there is hope in every breast that he will not fail to do what the public demand and what the exigencies of the occasion amply warrant.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

5,920,000 ON RELIEF.

The Secretary for India has received the following telegram from the Viceroy on the subject of the famine:—

"Week's reports show state of general expectancy pending advance of the monsoon, which has not yet established itself. Heavy rain has fallen in Burma, Bengal (Deltaic and Central), Behar, Orissa, Chattisgarh. On west coast monsoon current is weak, and has not progressed north of Goa nor penetrated inland over most of affected area. Hot weather conditions still exist, and no improvement in the affected districts or decrease in numbers on works possible until rainfall more general and heavier. Numbers of persons in receipt of relief:—Bombay, 1,288,000; Punjab, 165,000; Central Provinces, 1,971,000; Berar, 465,000; Ajmere-Merwara, 143,000; Rajputana States, 482,000; Central India States, 196,000; Bombay Native States, 489,000; Baroda, 92,000; North-Western Provinces, 2,000; Punjab Native States, 50,000; Central Provinces Feudatory States, 68,000; Hyderabad, 485,000; Madras, 16,000; Kashmir, nil; Bengal, 8,000. Total, 5,920,000."

The Secretary for India has received the following telegram from the Governor of Bombay:—

"Cholera decreasing generally. Following figures for week ending June 10:—Eleven districts: Cases of cholera 6,584, deaths from cholera 3,985. Six Native States: Deaths from cholera 1,144. Small-pox prevalent to some extent, not of an epidemic character. Total number of deaths among number on relief in British districts 3,294."

THE MANSION HOUSE FUND.

The Mansion House Fund for the relief of the Indian famine sufferers amounted on Wednesday night to £295,000. The Lord Mayor during the day remitted a further sum of £12,000 to Lord Curzon for relief purposes.

THE "INVESTORS' REVIEW" FUND.

Subjoined is the list and amount of subscriptions received for our little fund up to date. May we again repeat that it is a fund, every farthing of which will be put to good uses, especially in helping the starved cultivators to replace their lost cattle, and that the more help we can give in this direction the sooner will the distressed provinces and Native States—for they cannot be forgotten in the present misery—recover some of their ancient prosperity? Cheques and postal orders should be drawn to A. J. Wilson, crossed Union Bank of London, Famine Fund Account.

List of Subscriptions.

	£	s.	d.
Amount acknowledged last week	£614	5	0
Paddington Women's Liberal Association, per Miss Hodge, hon. treasurer	8	15	0
Members of the U.P.S.C.E. Congregational Church, Bromley	0	13	0
Mrs. Cobden Sickert, South Kensington ..	2	2	0
Total to date	£625	15	0

Remittances should be made to Mr. A. J. Wilson, *Investors' Review* office, Norfolk House, Norfolk Street, Strand, W.C.

THE LONDON INDIAN SOCIETY.
LETTER TO LORD SALISBURY.
A NATIONAL FAMINE GRANT.

We have received for publication a copy of the following Letter in reference to the London Indian Society's Memorial to the Prime Minister (printed in India, March 23, vol. xiii, p. 141):—

To the Most Noble The Marquis of Salisbury, K.G.,
Her Majesty's First Minister of State.

May it please your Lordship.

On behalf of the London Indian Society, consisting of Natives of India resident in the United Kingdom, we, as the honorary secretaries thereof, beg humbly to recall to your Lordship's recollection the Memorial from our Society bearing date March 2. We crave the renewed attention of yourself and your colleagues to the special prayer then laid before your Lordship, as First Minister of the Crown—namely, that some substantial grant may be made from the British Treasury to enable the Indian Government to cope more effectually with the intense distress now pressing upon one-third of the agricultural population, and to ward off the impending destruction of all their resources. We have to thank your Lordship for the formal acknowledgment of the receipt of our Memorial, and trust that its prayer has received careful consideration. We are now directed by the Committee of the Society to crave to be informed—at the earliest possible date—of the well-considered conclusions to which your Lordship and colleagues may have come regarding our earnest and urgent prayer for Imperial aid to our unfortunate country in the hour of its direst need.

2. At the time of our former communication the numbers employed on Relief Works were about four millions out of the population under famine conditions computed as about sixty millions; now there are nearly six millions having to be kept alive by relief work, representing a suffering population of more than ninety millions: the area then affected was represented as 450,000 square miles, but now it is much more. These figures can only faintly convey to the mind of the British public the depth and the intensity of the suffering now being endured by tens of millions of our country people; but from European correspondents who are now and have been travelling through the devastated regions, some more definite conception may be gained as to the bitterness of this misery, notably in the despatch from the *Manchester Guardian's* correspondent, writing from Ahmednagar under date March 9. Since our appeal was sent in the Indian Government's Special Commissioner, the Hon. Mr. Donald Smeaton, I.C.S., travelled through the Central Provinces and a large part of western India. After this tour he said: "The condition of the country is much worse than I had anticipated; the whole country is one vast, bare, brown, lonely desert." His Excellency Lord Curzon had previously spoken of the famine and its consequences as being "on a gigantic and ruinous scale," also as being unexampled in its magnitude. By way of illustration and to impress the fact on the minds of the British public, his Excellency cited the money value of the crops utterly lost by drought as amounting to forty millions sterling. He also at that date estimated the expenditure, with loss of revenue, of the Indian Government as eight and a-half millions, besides advances to landholders and certain of the Indian States. Later estimates make the former sum nearly as much more. Your Lordship's colleague, the Secretary of State for India, had, a fortnight earlier, in his very clear and compendious statement to the Lord Mayor, set out similar descriptions of the awful facts. But these descriptions fail to bring the tale of woe and suffering within the compass of the present extent and prospective sequences of this unparalleled calamity. As to the immediate future, we see that the destruction of millions of the cultivators' cattle, which—let the coming monsoon be as favourable as possible—almost precludes the hope of any recuperative efforts by the now famishing rayats, who are barely kept alive under the Famine Code regulations.

3. And now relief administration, admirably though it is being conducted by the officers engaged, is being baffled, throughout many districts, by outbreaks of cholera, rendered more fatal by the attenuated condition in which it finds its victims, who are left by tens of thousands to perish by roadsides. In presence of this fearful aggravation of suffering the correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, writing from Jaipur under date of May 1, says: "There can no longer be any doubt that a calamity of the most appalling kind is breaking over India, and that hundreds of thousands of poor wretches reduced by want . . . . must go down before the blast." Another special correspondent, writing from Nagpur April 20, also gives statistics to show that the present famine is "unparalleled in the history of the world." And in private letters from our friends in India we have accounts from eye-witnesses that not only confirm all that is said in official and other printed reports, but add agonising details that wellnigh break our hearts. Then, your Lordship will have seen the remarks made by the Famine Commissioner, Hon. Mr. Donald Smeaton, who after travelling through the Central Provinces to western India, thus writes: "The condition of the country is much worse than I had anticipated. The deepest tanks and reservoirs which have never before been known to run dry are now as dry as a rock. *The whole country is one vast, bare, brown, lonely desert.*" Thus it is painfully apparent that the Famine has got out of hand; that all ordinary codes and rules of expenditure must be suspended if the utter ruin of large portions of the Indian population is to be averted. It has now really come to such dire extremity that, to adopt the words used by Sir Bartle Frere in 1874—while only apprehending such a possibility as this which has now come to pass—the British Government "must wage War against Famine;" that is, without stint for cost.

4. The dire and unexampled need of India's suffering population being thus demonstrated, as your Lordship's own searching observation must for some time past have perceived, the prayer of our Society thus afresh put before her Majesty's Chief Minister and his colleagues obviously claims immediate and earnestly favourable consideration. Here we may pause a moment to express not only on behalf of our Society, but in the name of every Indian, the unbounded gratitude of our people for the generous donations for the famine-stricken from all classes in the United Kingdom through the Lord Mayor's Fund and many other channels; also from the British Colonies, the United States, Germany, and even Russia. Our words would fail to express the feeling throughout India which this spontaneous benevolence has evoked, and which, in the midst of despair, will long be remembered. And this might have gone without saying, were it not that, by comparison with the mountain of misery that needs to be compassed, the serious inadequacy of all that public subscriptions here, in the United States, and elsewhere can do, becomes, in the circumstances set out above, painfully apparent to us all.

5. Next we are to ask your Lordship's careful consideration to several references to the unprecedented nature of the Imperial exigency that have been made from both sides of the House of Commons since our Memorial was presented in March. Our Committee has duly noted the general assurances given by the Secretary of State for India and by the Leader of the House that "the progress of events in connexion with the famine in India are being carefully watched by her Majesty's Government," and that the Viceroy "has been informed that if the funds and resources of the Indian Government are insufficient to meet the emergency he could rely upon receiving aid from the Imperial Exchequer." This authoritative assurance of aid from the British Treasury, taken as it stands and on principle as a *National Grant*, which would, we feel sure, be freely and absolutely

given, to be expended, not all at once on more general relief, but on provision for restorative measures after the drought shall have passed away, is all our Society and the Indian people desire—subject to considerations as to adequacy in amount of such Imperial grant. Yet when the Secretary of State has spoken of "the means and financial resources of the Indian Government being sufficient for the emergency,"—which "means" and "resources," it must be remembered, are entirely extracted from the labour and privations of the Indian peoples themselves—it is apparent that this points towards the resource of advance by way of loan; for it is manifest that the present revenues and cash balances of the Government of India are utterly inadequate to cope with the present unexampled calamity and its exhausting effects.

6. This temporary and superficial expedient, we are to submit, is not adapted to meet the terrible disaster the extent and nature of which His Excellency Lord Curzon seems to have realised far more clearly than anyone here in common with the Secretary of State in Council. To say nothing of the addition to permanent debt that such expedient implies, the annual interest on such loan would only add to the one chief economic cause of that chronic poverty of the masses of the Indian people whose present deplorable condition explains the utter destitution in which each recurring drought finds them, thereby throwing them on the tender mercies of famine relief. The funds expended on that relief are, have been, and will be drawn from the revenues contributed by the suffering people themselves during the few years of good crops from which they derive hardly bare subsistence after satisfying the State's demands. And as your Lordship is well aware, a very large proportion of these revenues are regularly taken out of India in payment of those large items of Indian expenditure which are disbursed in this the dominant country, thereby contributing to the income and wealth of the United Kingdom, which disbursements do not return to India and are thereby lost to its industry and commerce. This constant and increasing depletion of India's resources is shown on the face of the Government of India's carefully calculated statistics. Thus in the three years ending in March, 1899, they amounted to over 61½ millions of Rx.—two of these being the comparatively good years since last famine; the Home charges for the same period being Rx. 74,028,307. This exhausting drain of India's annual revenue is always going on; for instance, in the five years ending in March, 1893, a fairly prosperous period, showed an average annual withdrawal of 21½ million Rx. For the year that closed with last March the amount would probably reach 30 million Rx.; and even in the Budget of this famine year £16,000,000 are put down to be drawn out of our impoverished country.

7. Thus it must be obvious to your Lordship and to your Right Honourable colleagues in the Ministry of our Queen-Empress that an advance or loan, though it might provide temporarily the ways and means for the as yet imperfectly estimated outlay imperatively required to save nearly one-third of the British Indian population, and rescue them from the utter desolation now impending, must prove no *real* remedy for the unparalleled crisis that has overtaken England's Indian Empire. Therefore our Society once more appeals to your Lordship, as one of the foremost statesmen of the day, to decide, without further delay, to support the only effective way by which the United Kingdom can, for the present, carry out and rescue the now unhappy land. His Excellency Lord Curzon with a true statesmanlike insight recently spoke thus: "India is the pivot of the British Empire. If we lose our Colonies we may survive; but if we lose India the sun of the British Empire will be set." Thus it is not only on grounds of humanity, which are as strong as can be, in view of the present rapidly increasing suffering of our fellow-subjects; it is not only on the ground of political equity, which, when looked into, would prove to be irresistible; but, looking before and after, it is a question of the very salvation of India as a source of profit and power to this United Kingdom. On the other hand, never could the principle of Imperial obligation be more cogent on the part of a wealthy, all-powerful, dominant country to its famishing and impoverished dependency than it is in this present crisis. This principle of obligation to India has often been expressed by eminent Anglo-Indian statesmen in the past; and this sense of Imperial duty was recently stated by the Hon. Mr. Donald Smeaton thus: "Great Britain and Ireland owe a debt to the Indian peasant—a debt of millions on millions." That the people of this country are quite willing that such national grant should be made on their behalf, your Lordship may be well assured; for, as evidence to this effect, not only are there the references already spoken of and which have been made in Parliament, but resolutions in favour of this course have been adopted by local authorities of the Hartlepools, by the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, and at scores of public meetings held in the north of England during the last few weeks.

8. It is not for our Society to suggest any limit to the extent of the grant which your Lordship and your colleagues may consider necessary for this great effort of rescue. But on the basis of the Indian Government's estimate of the present and probable outlay required for the fulfilment of promises made, from time to time, to "make war on famine" so as to prevent any perishing from hunger, a sum of ten millions sterling would scarcely cover that estimate. As to the direction in which this largess may be now applied, and the measures for diminishing these constantly recurring droughts, time would fail to describe them merely in outline. It is not for us to undertake the task; and it is not required of us, seeing that men of large experience and great knowledge who have been members of the various Commissions have investigated the problems and have placed their conclusions on record.

Trusting that this humble and earnest solicitation may have your Lordship's sympathy on grounds of political equity and duty, we leave our prayers in your all-powerful hands.

We have the honour to be
Your Lordship's humble and obedient servants,
(Signed) ASUTOSH DAS,
V. J. MODY,
June 5, 1900. *Honorary Secretaries, London Indian Society.*

SIR W. WEDDERBURN, M.P., ON THE FAMINE.

Sir William Wedderburn, M.P., addressed a meeting under the auspices of the Thames Ironworks, in the Canning Town Public Hall, on Wednesday night (June 20), in support of the Indian Famine Relief Fund. The Chair was occupied by Mr. Thomas Deekie (in the absence of the Mayor of West Ham, Alderman J. H. Bethell).

The Chairman, in opening the meeting, said there could be no better time than the present for endeavouring to relieve the suffering millions in India. There was no need for him to say anything respecting India in the presence of such a veteran and warrior in the Indian question as Sir William Wedderburn.

The following resolution was then unanimously agreed to: "That this meeting, deeply grieved by the horrors of famine and pestilence suffered by the people of India, urges liberal private donations to the Indian Famine Fund."

The next resolution on the paper was: "That this meeting recognising the responsibility of this country for the welfare of the Indian people, is of opinion that an Imperial grant should be given to the Indian Famine Fund, and further urges upon the Government to institute a searching enquiry into the causes why the Indian masses are so destitute that they cannot tide over the failure of one harvest." This resolution having been duly proposed and seconded,

Sir William Wedderburn rose amid cheers to support it. He said: Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,—I am very glad indeed to be here this evening, both on account of the object of the meeting, with which I heartily sympathise, and also on account of its nature, because I know that it has been called by workmen of the Thames Ironworks and their friends, and I attach the very highest importance to the working-men of this country paying attention to the Indian question. I hope that the example set to-night will be followed by borough authorities, and that they will call town meetings, and set before their citizens the extreme need of the poor people of India. I feel convinced that all that is wanted is that the people of this country should realise the situation and the intensity of the suffering of these poor people, and the enormous power of alleviation which is to be found in money, because this famine is one of money not of food. There is plenty of food in the country if the people had the money to buy it or were able to earn money. The average income of the people of India is a penny halfpenny a day. It is a pity that everybody should not give many penny halfpennies to save the lives of these poor people. I propose to say a few words in regard to the intensity of the famine, then to refer to what the Government is doing to mitigate it, and afterwards to try to give an answer to the question, suggested in the resolution, as to whether such terrible famines may not be prevented. This famine is greater in its intensity and its disastrous effects than any previously recorded. It affects one quarter of the whole Indian empire. There are about six millions of people receiving daily bread from the Government, and this number is daily increasing. The stress must go on until September, for not until then can the harvest be reaped. It is almost impossible from figures to realise what this calamity means. I will therefore read a few extracts from an account of his experiences given by an eye-witness. This gentleman says he met everywhere with most shocking scenes. The famine camps were swept by cholera and small-pox, those who had taken refuge in the camps were flying from them in fear and were spreading infection everywhere, and, stricken in their flight, they were found dying in the fields, ditches, and along the roadside. The death-rate in the hospitals was ninety per cent. I may say that the only way that the Government can feed these enormous masses of people is by collecting them in large famine camps. Famine, plague, and cholera have made the state of the Bombay Presidency worse than it has ever been before in the nineteenth century. Whole families have been blotted out, the spirit of the people is broken, and there may be worse to come when the monsoon breaks. Things are indeed getting worse every day. Although the rains are falling no harvest can be reaped until September. I do not know that the Government has made any provision for feeding the people while they are cultivating their fields, but that is one of the ways in which the charity funds are to be applied. Regarding the work that the Government is doing in order to relieve and mitigate the famine, I say at once, I have no complaint to make against the methods employed or the work that is being done. The methods have been perfected after a great deal of enquiry by the Famine Commission, and the self-sacrifice and devotion of the rank and file of the officers of the Government is beyond praise. (Applause.) Although there is nothing but praise for the people who are working so hard, we must remember that what relief the Government is able to give is under strict regulations. Lord Curzon, referring to our official rules, says they are cast-iron rules. In administering a great department of many millions of people you have to make rigid rules, and it is very difficult to modify them. The result of this is that the Government relief is administered by three methods: first, by giving the people work in great relief camps and giving them food and payment; second, by the remission of the rent which the cultivators have to pay to the Government; third, by making advances to the Natives to buy cattle, for among the horrors of the present famine is the complete destruction of the plough-cattle by which alone the Natives are able to cultivate their lands. We think, as is stated in the resolution, that all the people of this country should subscribe by having an Imperial grant given to this famine fund, because, ladies and gentlemen, we are all responsible for these people. We have votes; but these poor people have not votes and are, therefore, not responsible. I hope that you will send this resolution to the House of Commons. Every time this suggestion of an Imperial grant has been made it has been received with great favour by both sides of the House. I am quite sure that if it were brought forward by the Government there would be a handsome vote granted towards the relief of the famine. To my mind the Secretary for India has not properly realised the situation and dealt with it as became his grave responsibility. As regards the work of the Government of India, I say that they have done their best to mitigate the

evil; but what we want is more money, and all should contribute. The next question is, Can nothing be done to prevent such famines? I say much can be done, and I say that it is duty of the Government to examine, and make a searching enquiry into, the condition of the cultivator. It is no answer, when we ask for an enquiry, to say we are doing our best to relieve the suffering of the people. We maintain that prevention is better than cure—(hear, hear)—and, therefore, we say that what is to be done is to make a searching enquiry into the condition of the people. It is not a very difficult enquiry, because almost the whole population is a rural one. The people are gathered into about half a million village communities, and if we examine into the condition of a few typical villages we should be able to take our cue from them. I have asked for that enquiry three times in the House of Commons. I have three times moved a formal resolution, and I have received great support from independent members. When the debate took place in the House of Commons, Sir Henry Fowler, the then Secretary for India, said he could not see that the Government were responsible. I, in answer to that, say that it is true that the Government are not responsible for the failure of rain; but if the masses are so destitute that they cannot survive the failure of one harvest, that is the responsibility of the Government. If the people had a sufficient stock of grain in their houses they would not die of starvation because of the failure of one harvest. But, unfortunately, the pressure of severe taxation upon the people is such that they are too poor to keep a store of grain in their houses. For instance, the taxation on salt is 2,000 per cent. The cultivator of India ought to be very prosperous. He has a very fine climate, a rich soil, and plenty of cheap labour. If the Indian cultivator had fair play India would be a garden instead of a place of desolation. I have had thirty years' experience of India, as a Government official, and I can say that I never received the smallest unkindness from any Native of that country. It is, therefore, with great grief that I see the calamitous state into which they have fallen. (Applause.)

The resolution was unanimously agreed to, and the meeting then resolved to authorise the Chairman to forward a copy to Lord George Hamilton, and the member for the borough.

Imperial Parliament.

Friday, June 15.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

PAPERS PRESENTED.

East India (Famine).—Copy presented—of Papers regarding the Famine and the Relief Operations in India during 1899-1900; Vol. I. British Districts, Vol. II. Native States [by Command]; to lie upon the Table.

East India (Income and Expenditure).—Return presented—relative thereto [Address 28th May; Sir Henry Fowler]; to lie upon the Table, and to be printed. [No. 203.]

East India (Progress and Condition).—Copy presented—of Statement exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during the year 1898-9. Thirty-fifth Number [by Act]; to lie upon the Table.

CAVALRY CARBINES.

Sir Charles Dilke asked the Secretary of State for India, if he could state what proportion of the British cavalry in India was still armed with the Martini-Henry carbine.

Lord G. Hamilton: The Government of India anticipate that by the end of this month the whole of the British cavalry in India will be armed with magazine carbines. At present one regiment still carries single-loaders.

FAMINE: "NOT A QUESTION OF MONEY."

Mr. William Redmond asked the Secretary of State for India, if his attention had been called to the report of Dr. Klopsch, administrator of the fund raised in New York for the relief of distress in India, and whether he had any information to the effect, as stated in the report, that vultures, dogs and jackals had been found devouring human bodies left unburied:

And, whether, in view of the suffering caused by famine and plague throughout India at present, the Government would recommend at once the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the best and speediest method of dealing with the state of affairs now existing in her Majesty's Indian Empire.

Lord G. Hamilton: I have seen the telegram of Dr. Klopsch, and have read similar statements in one or two of the numerous reports that have reached me. These statements only apply to the districts, limited in number I am glad to say, where cholera and smallpox have attacked the famine camps, thus forming a combination which for the moment baffles any administrative palliation. A Commission of great weight and authority was appointed in 1897 to report on the best method of dealing with famine in India, and its suggestions, which were published in 1898 after a most elaborate and searching enquiry, have been of great value; another similar Commission was appointed in 1898 to deal with the plague, and has produced a most important and exhaustive report, part of which only has yet been published. I do not therefore propose at present to advise the appointment of a Royal Commission, though it may hereafter be advisable, when the present epidemics are over, to utilise the experience gained by making it the subject of further reports.

Mr. W. Redmond asked whether the Government proposed to wait until millions of people met their death by starvation before they would inquire as to a remedy.

Lord G. Hamilton: I hope the monsoon which has begun will very shortly put an end to the famine. I think the hon. gentleman will see that it is quite impossible with only a limited number of officials at our disposal to ask them to put on one side the more pressing work of ministering to the wants of the distressed in order to make enquiries and ascertain statistics.

Mr. W. Redmond asked whether the noble lord would urge on the Government the desirability of raising at once whatever money might be necessary in order to put an end to this scandal and give some relief to the people.

Lord G. Hamilton: It is not a question of money. (Hear, hear.) The only method by which you can deal with the enormous number of people who are suffering from hunger over great areas is to aggregate them in camps in healthy sites. Unfortunately, in the west of India there has been no rain for the last seven months and the difficulty is not so much the scarcity of food as the purity of the water. If cholera attacks in its worst form one of the camps it so terrifies the people that they fly in all directions, carrying with them the germs of disease and dying by the roadsides and in ditches. And the difficulty does not end there even, because not only does the panic affect the people who are congregated in the camps, but it affects the hospital assistants, camp followers, and camp scavengers. I believe that on more than one occasion the European officer after a panic has found himself with but few assistants in the presence of the dead and dying, all the rest having fled. It is due to such a state of things and not to a lack of money that the difficulty arises.

Mr. W. Redmond said the noble lord had not said whether it would not be possible by the application of money, by the employment of a sufficient number of assistants——

The Speaker: Order, order. This is now becoming a debate. The hon. member must give notice of any further question.

Mr. W. Redmond: With great respect, I desire simply to ask a question——

The Speaker: The hon. member is proceeding to debate the answer given. That is not proper.

Mr. W. Redmond: Oh, of course not. You spend sixty millions of money on war and let the people of India die of famine.

FAMINE AND PLAGUE STATISTICS.

Mr. James O'Connor asked the Secretary of State for India, if he could state the total number of persons on relief works in India, how long the present famine had continued, how many persons had died from hunger and disease, and what was the number of deaths from the bubonic plague since the outbreak of the epidemic to the present date.

Lord G. Hamilton: The total number of persons on relief works in India, according to the latest accounts, is 5,802,000. The famine was caused by the failure of last autumn's rains, and has, therefore, lasted about seven months. It is absolutely impossible at present to form even an approximate estimate of the number of deaths which it has caused directly or indirectly. In some parts of India, where famine has been aggravated by cholera and smallpox, the mortality, I fear, has been very heavy; in other large districts, where the famine is equally severe, but has not been associated with wholesale epidemic disease, the efforts of the Government of India and its organisation of relief have been so successful that the death-rate is hardly above normal. The total number of reported plague deaths from 1896, when the epidemic began, down to last April was 358,685—that is to say, about one death per annum to every 3,000 living inhabitants of India. At the present moment the plague mortality in Bombay is lower than at any period in the three preceding years.

Mr. J. O'Connor asked whether the noble lord would be able to give the number of deaths that had occurred from famine.

Lord G. Hamilton: I hope the hon. gentleman will recollect that the area covered by famine contains 61,000,000 people, and that the number of Europeans and of officials in that district is very small. He will see that, necessarily, a considerable time must elapse before anything like adequate statistics can be obtained, but I shall accelerate the collecting of information as far as I can, and I shall see that it is published as soon as possible.

AN IMPERIAL FAMINE GRANT.

Sir William Wedderburn asked the Secretary of State for India whether he had received a memorial from the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce affirming the responsibility of this country for the well-being of the people of India, and urging her Majesty's Government to at once invite Parliament to vote an Imperial Grant in relief of the Indian famine:

And whether he would state what reply had been given to the memorialists.

Lord G. Hamilton: I received about a month ago a memorial from the Glasgow Chamber of Commerce, the purport of which is correctly stated in the hon. member's question. My reply was to the effect that the Government of India had undertaken to prevent deaths from famine and to relieve suffering, so far as those objects could be attained by the expenditure of money and the administrative machinery at their disposal; that they had been informed that if their financial resources should prove insufficient to carry out this undertaking, her Majesty's Government would be ready to give help in whatever form might be thought most advisable, and that, having regard to what the famine had already cost and might be expected to cost on the one hand, and to the state of the Indian finances on the other, there seemed to be at present no reason to apprehend that such help would be required.

NO "GREAT CHANGE OF POLICY."

Mr. James O'Connor asked the First Lord of the Treasury whether it was the intention of the Government to vote a sum of money for the relief of the famine-stricken people of India.

Mr. Balfour: I do not think there are sufficient grounds at present for initiating the great change of policy which the hon. gentleman suggests.

Monday, June 18.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

EAST INDIA RAILWAYS.

On the motion of Mr. Cohen, an Address was granted for Copy of any correspondence between the India Office and the Bank of England

regarding the rate of interest to be adopted in the calculation of the annuities for the purchase of the East Indian Railway, the Eastern Bengal Railway, the Scinde, Punjab, and Delhi Railway, and the Great Indian Peninsula Railway, respectively.

INDIAN TROOPS FOR HONG-KONG.

Mr. Yerburgh asked the First Lord of the Treasury a question of which he had sent him private notice—namely, whether it was the intention of the Government to send Native troops from India to reinforce the garrison of Hong-Kong.

Mr. Balfour: The answer to my hon. friend's question is in the affirmative. (Cheers.)

EAST INDIA RAILWAY COMPANY.

Sir Howard Vincent asked the Secretary of State for India, whether it had been brought to his notice that the East India Railway Company, which was guaranteed by the Indian Government in respect of its interest, had recently placed orders in Germany for wheels and axles instead of in Sheffield, and if the representative of the Government or the Board would be instructed to urge that the shipments should at least be effected on British ships.

Lord G. Hamilton: My hon. friend is aware that the Secretary of State, although he is represented upon the Boards of the guaranteed Indian railways, does not control the management or working of the lines. I am informed that for business reasons, as well as on patriotic grounds, a decided preference is given as a rule to goods of English manufacture; but in this case the difference in price, amounting to about £12,350, between Messrs. Krupp's tender and the lowest available English tender was so great as to make it impossible to adhere to the usual practice. The principles which govern the acceptance of tenders for goods apply equally to tenders for freight. I do not propose to give any special instructions on this occasion; but I have no doubt that British shipping will be employed unless its employment would involve an unreasonable charge upon the company.

Tuesday, June 19.

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

THE G.I.P. RAILWAY.

Mr. Caldwell moved: That it is expedient to authorise the creation of Annuities to be charged on and payable out of the Revenues of India in lieu of the sum of money amounting to £34,859,217 17s. 6d. agreed upon for the purchase by the Secretary of State in Council of India of the undertaking of the Great Indian Peninsula Railway Company, and the payment of any costs and expenses incurred by the said Secretary of State under any Act of the present Session for vesting the said undertaking in the said Secretary of State in Council of India; and also any costs, charges, and expenses of obtaining and passing the said Act not provided by the surplus profits arising from the said undertaking for the half-year ending June 30, 1900.

Mr. Gibson Bowles said he did not dispute the propriety of the purchase of this railway, or the method by which it was affected, but he should like to ask the Secretary of State for India what was the period for which these annuities would run, whether they would include a sinking fund, and whether there were any charges on the revenues of the United Kingdom. In the case of a Bill like this, where £35,000,000 was concerned, he thought the House should have been supplied before hand with information in some printed form in regard to it.

Lord G. Hamilton said this was a Bill for the acquisition by the Government of India of a great railway by means of an arrangement which he was glad to say would be financially advantageous to the Government. The Government of India had the option of acquiring this property by two methods of purchase, either by paying a lump sum or by annuity, and they had adopted the latter system for convenience. In fact they had pursued an analogous course to that adopted in the case of all Bills by which they had in past years acquired possession of similar undertakings. The annuity was to run for 50 years, and included a sinking fund. No charge whatsoever would be placed on the revenues of this country. The words in the latter part of the motion were inserted because it was possible that the surplus profits of this line, which passed at once into the hands of the Government, might not be sufficient to meet all the expenses of this Act. He quite agreed with his hon. friend that when a transaction of this magnitude was brought before the House it should be done in such a way that hon. members might understand what they were about. (Hear, hear.) This was a private Bill, and therefore he was not, in that sense, responsible for the method by which it was introduced to the House; if he had known that it was coming before the House he would have taken care that in some way or other this resolution was so far brought to the notice of hon. members that they would have understood the nature of the transaction.

Mr. E. Robertson said the measure was one of great magnitude, being nothing less than the nationalisation of a great Indian railway, with regard to which no information had been given to the House. He presumed a Bill had been introduced, and would like to know what stage it had reached.

Lord G. Hamilton said the Bill was an unopposed private Bill, and had passed the second reading. It was necessary to get the assent of the House to the resolution before it could proceed.

Mr. Robertson demurred to such a Bill being introduced in that form, and hoped that means would be found by the Government of converting it into a public measure.

The Chairman: That is an objection which ought to have been taken before the full House.

Mr. J. E. Ellis said he wished to enter the strongest possible protest against the procedure which had been adopted in the case of this Bill.

Mr. Herbert Lewis also protested against the form of procedure adopted.

The resolution was agreed to, and was reported to the House.

THE FAMINE IN INDIA.

Sir William Wedderburn asked the Secretary of State for India, whether he would state to which Native States advances of money had been made to help them in dealing with the famine, and what the amount had been in each case.

Lord G. Hamilton: On May 31 I telegraphed to India for a detailed statement of advances made to Native States for famine purposes, but I have not yet received the figures up to date. Papers which have come before me show that some time back there had been advanced to States in Rajputana £250,000, to States in Central India £50,000, to States in Kathiawar £50,000, to States in the Central Provinces £20,000. A famine loan of £500,000 has also been sanctioned for the Haidarabad State under the guarantee of the Indian Government.

Sir Henry Fowler asked the Secretary of State for India, whether, having regard to the appeal made by the Viceroy of India to the Lord Mayor of London for charitable contributions on behalf of the sufferers by the famine in India, the time had arrived for asking Parliament for a grant from Imperial funds to the Indian Exchequer.

Lord G. Hamilton: The Viceroy's letter was intended to give information as to the purposes to which the money subscribed had been applied, the good results obtained, and the need of further subscriptions for the same objects. But it does not affect the question whether the financial resources of India are sufficient for the task which the Government of that country has undertaken in connexion with the relief of famine, a task which, as the right hon. gentleman is aware, is distinct from that to which the money raised by subscription is applied. As to the financial resources of the Government of India, I may state that we have in this country an untouched borrowing power of £9,000,000, a portion of which I propose to utilise next month.

Mr. Maclean asked the Secretary of State for India, whether medical authorities in India had condemned the practice of collecting together people seeking famine relief in large camps which were specially liable to attacks of epidemic disease, instead of distributing them near their own homes:

Whether Mr. Monteath, Chief Secretary to Government, had reported that it was undoubtedly true that there was not sufficient establishment in India to deal adequately with the demands for relief, and that it was not supposed that the rules and orders of Government were perfectly carried out:

And, whether the India Office still considered that the resources of India were sufficient to deal with the famine.

Sir H. Fowler said he desired to ask a supplementary question, as the noble lord had not really answered the question he had put to him. He had asked whether there was to be a grant from the Imperial to the Indian Exchequer, and the noble lord, in reply, spoke about the borrowing powers of the Indian Government.

Lord G. Hamilton: I pointed out that the Indian Government have in this country borrowing powers to the extent of £9,000,000. Any grant made by the Imperial Government to[illegible]is India must be made by loan, and therefore I assumed my right hon. friend would gather that it was only reasonable that the Indian Government should try to realise its own resources before it came to Parliament.

Mr. Maclean: Does the noble lord say that the Viceroy of India does not use the resources at his disposal for the relief of the famine though the people are dying by thousands?

Lord G. Hamilton: I did not say anything of the kind. In reply to the question of the hon. gentleman on the paper I have to say that I am not aware that the opinion of medical authorities in India is against large relief works. It is, of course, obvious that there are some disadvantages in collecting the sufferers from famine in large camps, but the system is, on the whole, working well and appears to be the only one under which relief on a large scale can be effectively supervised. I have no knowledge of any such report as that which is attributed in the question to a secretary of the Bombay Government. I have reason to believe that, although there must be much misery and distress connected with so unparalleled a drought, the resources of the Indian Government, as matters now stand, are equal to the task undertaken by that Government in respect of the famine.

INDIAN TROOPS FOR CHINA.

Mr. Buchanan asked the Secretary of State for India, whether the expenses, ordinary and extraordinary, of the Indian troops being despatched to Hong-kong and China would be borne entirely by the Imperial Government.

Lord George Hamilton: All expenses ordinary and extraordinary of any Indian troops who may be despatched to Hong-Kong and China will be borne entirely by the Imperial Government.

NOTICES OF QUESTIONS.

Notice has been given of the following questions:—

Sir William Wedderburn.—To ask the Secretary of State for India, whether, looking to the use that is being made of Indian troops for Imperial purposes in South Africa and China, and looking also to the distressed condition of India, the Government will take into early consideration the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Indian Expenditure as to the apportionment of charge between India and the Imperial Exchequer. [*Thursday, June* 21.]

Sir William Wedderburn.—To ask the Secretary of State for India, if he will state at what date the explanatory memorandum of the Indian Financial Statement will be issued to Members:

And, will the total figures be expressed in tens of rupees, so as to allow of comparison with previous statements. [*Thursday, June* 21.]

Sir William Wedderburn.—To ask the First Lord of the Treasury, whether, looking to the condition of India, he will arrange for the Indian Budget to be brought forward at an early date. [*Thursday, June* 21.]

NOW READY.

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